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Evolution and Social Effects of Faith-based International Nongovernmental Organizations

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“Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings”-Nelson Mandela.

The role of international nongovernmental organizations, or INGOS, is instrumental in the fight against poverty in developing countries whose needs are often greater than the poverty alleviation abilities of their governments. Poverty constitutes a lack of any type of material resources and can range from mild to extreme. Mild poverty usually means simply a high level of economic inequality in society, whereas extreme poverty translates into the deprivation of resources that are necessary to sustain human life, such as food, water, clothing, shelter, etc. Poverty in the current era of globalization is tied to a vicious “cycle of underdevelopment,” that has two important factors: very low production capacity and scarce human services (Kelleher & Klein, 2011, p. 75). Low productivity means that products are not produced efficiently and there is a high prevalence of a subsistence lifestyle, which means that only what is needed for survival is produced.

Kelleher and Klein (2011) also suggest that a lack of human services “inhibits development and reinforces the existence of a dual economy,” (p. 76) which is where a minority elite class engages in comfortable consumerism while the rest of the population suffers in poverty. External interferences, such as the imposition of free trade and the presence of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), might help break this cycle of poverty. Free trade enables economic growth by allowing the international flow of goods without tariffs and other barriers imposed by the state. INGOS provide infrastructure, social services, humanitarian assistance, and other forms of development that can produce social and economic improvements in a state.

The philosophy of humanitarianism has existed since the time of the Enlightenment, and it seeks to promote the welfare of all human beings. Often operating through nongovernmental organizations, humanitarians strive for economic equality and development in developing countries. Some humanitarian groups are secular, which others are faith-based. Faith-based international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) have become prominent in the arena of humanitarian development since the era of World War II. Operating around the globe as a result of globalization, these groups provide social services that the governments of the host countries either cannot or will not provide. To gain a deeper understanding of the intentions and effects of faith-based INGOs, I will explore these groups and their practices of development, poverty alleviation, hunger relief, and other various activities.

The objective of this paper is to look at the cultural, social, and environmental impacts of faith-based INGOs, three faith-based and one secular, on Guatemalan society. I will examine these impacts within the framework of participatory development, which is the aim to include aid recipients in development projects to ensure long-run sustainability and stability. I will go back in time to study the beginnings of faith-based INGOs, which are rooted in the 1980s around the time of the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the Christian right movement in the United States, and the fight against communism in Latin America. Looking at the history of faith-based INGOs, I will relate their evolution to the historical eras that Latin America has experienced since the age of colonization, specifically the dominating power of the Roman Catholic church, the establishment of Spanish missions in Latin America, liberalism, secularism, and neoliberalism. In the case study, I will examine the influence of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Guatemala over the course of history and later discuss the cultural and social impacts of various INGOs on the country (several faith-based and one secular). I was unable to find quantitative

data on faith-based INGOs, so my arguments and evaluations will be supported with qualitative information that I found while doing research. This paper is divided into the following sections: Explanation of faith-based INGOs and their international role; Evolution of faith-based INGOs; Colonization, liberalism, and neoliberalism in Latin America; Case study of Guatemala; and Impact of faith-based INGOs. This paper concludes with a summary of my findings and personal connections I made to this topic and to my research findings.

Explanation of Faith-based INGOs and their International Role

An understanding of the international role of faith-based INGOs is instrumental in studying their impact on Guatemala because it is important to be aware of how they operate all over the world in general, working for human rights, positive change, and development. Furthermore, the role of faith in these organizations is very significant because it affects their intentions and how they operate in developing countries. The faith of these organizations can also cause unforeseen conflict between rival religious groups.

Faith-based international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) are non-profit groups of volunteers working internationally in developing regions of the world to conduct projects that enact positive change and development. Their roles in the world are human rights advocacy, humanitarian work, protection for people, and public education. Faith-based INGOs typically rely on donations, member dues, and unpaid help to operate. Their values are stated to be Christian (or of another faith) but may not be directly affiliated with any church. Work done by a faith-based INGO is similar to that done by a secular INGO; however, these organizations “are motivated by their faith and they have a constituency which is broader than humanitarian concerns” (Ferris, 2005, p. 316). This reinforces the theory that the faith of these organizations strongly affects their reasons for humanitarianism. To look briefly at secular INGOs, “functional

secularism” sets the stage for modern humanitarianism and “marginalizes religious language, practice and experience in both the global and local conceptualization of humanitarian action” (Ager 2011). Instead, functional secularism focuses on “core humanitarian values” rather than on values based on a specific faith.

There are quite a few factors that evaluate the extent of religiosity of faith-based INGOS. The mission statement of an organization conveys its level of religiosity, since the mission statement can range from completely secular to evangelical. The more evangelical the message is, the more significant a role that religion plays. The affiliation of the group determines its religiosity because the connection of the group to a religious denomination shows a narrower religious focus. Staff policies reflect religiosity, as the religious status of the staff members indicates how religious or secular the organization is. The source of support also dictates how religious an INGO is. Faith-based INGOS look to a religious support base for funding, volunteers, and workers. The donor base affects the degree of religiosity because there is often a trade-off between receiving government funds and preserving the beliefs and values of the organization. Typically, there is a negative relationship between level of religiosity and government funding; therefore, faith-based INGOS often look to religious bases for support instead of compromising their values to get government money. Most faith-based INGOS are financially supported privately.

Christian INGOS often combine humanitarian relief with a missionary message and tend to provide relief to a wider variety of religions than Jewish or Islamic INGOS, who usually focus on aiding those affiliated with their respective religions. Faith-based INGOS can be successful in addressing religious disagreements, but they do not necessarily consider these conflicts to be the focus of their work. They generally attempt to remain neutral and focus on their humanitarian

efforts, but their neutrality frequently fails because religious conflicts are often an underlying cause of underdevelopment and poverty.

Faith-based INGOS center in on both human rights and humanitarian work. Human rights advocacy involves fighting against the repression of human rights, watching over advancing situations, and identifying governments that do not protect their citizens. Humanitarianism involves giving aid to victims of conflicts (both political and social) and natural disasters. Many times, humanitarian faith-based INGOS refrain from publicly fighting for human rights due to the fear of the host countries' governments shutting down their activities, and "[they] maintain that they use so-called 'quiet' interventions as appropriate to raise concerns about human rights abuses with the relevant public officials or armed groups" (Ferris, 2005, p. 320). When INGOS give attention to the abuse of human rights, negative side effects are highly possible.

Not all faith-based INGOS are necessarily concerned with the spirituality of their beneficiaries. The mission of these groups is based on their religious beliefs, which are a combination of religious values with secular goals. According to Thaut (2009), Kniss and Campbell's study (1997) concluded that the scale and costs of the operations of faith-based organizations and secular groups are roughly the same, but those of evangelical groups are not because they build churches while delivering relief. Therefore, secular groups and faith-based INGOS are less easily distinguishable because the religious language is broader and more academic than that of evangelical organizations. Faith may impact the manner in which actions are carried out; however, influences of faith may become gradually minimized over time as the organizations acclimate to the environments in which they work and the resources available to them.

Faith-based INGOS do not want to become entangled in religious conflicts because they often are not associated with any of the warring religions and they wish to take their own safety into account. Furthermore, they want to stay on the friendly side of the host governments because the governments have the power to expel them from the country, eliminating any chance of the INGOS delivering aid where it is desperately needed. Therefore, faith-based INGOS, if they wish to pursue the development of impoverished areas, must stay quiet and choose a policy of nonintervention in most conflicts.

Evolution of faith-based INGOS

The study of the evolution of faith-based INGOS is important in the discourse of this topic because to be able to fully understand their role in the world and specifically in Guatemala today, it is critical to examine where they came from and how they have developed over time. Becoming extremely well-known during Reagan's presidency and the Christian right movement, faith-based INGOS are often supported by former communists and socialists.

Individuals and faith-based groups gave aid to those suffering under environmental disasters, oppression, violence, and war well before international humanitarian law became widespread. Charitable work and benevolence toward the poor is prevalent in the Hebrew bible, and monasteries and temples often provided safety for victims of persecution. The ways of the Catholic church were to give charitably to the poor, to provide medical treatment to the ill, to treat strangers hospitably, and to educate the young. The diaconate, in the Orthodox and Protestant denominations, did humanitarian work, which is known as these denominations' main focus. This humanitarianism was based on the belief that every human being on earth has extraordinary value, as well as on the Christian values of goodwill and grace.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, mission groups in North America and Europe were founded to gain converts to the Christian faith. The earliest INGOS aided to fight famine in Russia and gave aid to war victims in the Balkans and Armenia. Also involving themselves in lobbying and advocacy, they focused the public's attention on international issues and encouraged the government to respond.

Domestic NGOs in countries with primitive economies did not exist until about 25 years ago. Globalization spread thoughts of development and relief, causing the mobilization of NGOs in developing countries. INGOS, both Christian ones and secular ones that delivered humanitarian aid, grew rapidly after World War II and today are relatively new to society, pushing for social progress and an interdependent world that ensured that the poor advanced along with the rich. The members of these organizations have a "pay-it-forward" mentality and believe that reaching out and giving aid is simply the right way to live. Most of these INGOS originate in advanced economy countries. INGOS from developed countries help the indigenous NGOs in other countries with relief and technological services.

At the time of the rise of INGOS, INGOS in the United States had a degree of amateurism, raising money from small private contributors and setting modest goals to deliver relief to the rest of the world. They were not held in high regard by government agencies, especially by the World Bank and United Nations. Reputed to be "utopian, antagonistic to government, and potentially obstructionist," (Dichter, 1999, p. 44), INGOS and the U.S. government clashed with one another, which continued when human rights and environmental INGOS were established. The attitude of the government determined how much freedom the INGOS had in their actions.

In June 1948, the Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCVA), of which thirty seven international agencies were members, was established to bring organizations together to come up with solutions to refugee-related issues. In the 1950s and early 1960s, capital investment in infrastructure and industrial capacity was thought to be the most beneficial in social and political development. Religious agencies delivered ninety percent of post-war relief during this time period, providing resources for the resettlement of Europeans fleeing from the Soviets (Ferris, 2005, p. 315). In 1962, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) was formed, with sixty five agencies as members. It was a union of Northern and Southern NGOs in the United States interested in humanitarian relief and development.

In the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, growth with equity, not just growth, became the main focus. Impatience emerged, with a feeling that the poor needed help immediately. The development agenda during this time was to alleviate poverty and inequality, to relieve environmental pressures, and to use resources in a sustainable manner. NGOs grew some during this time, but not as fast as intergovernmental organizations, which became very active. In January 1980, Ronald Reagan became president, which sparked the expanding importance of faith-based organizations in development. Reagan put into motion the Christian right in support of his local and foreign policy, which strongly resisted Communism.

Over the next twenty five years, the Christian right grew and changed American politics. According to Clarke (2006), “by 2003, an estimated 43% of the U.S. electorate was evangelical, a significant shift away from the mainstream Christian denominations towards a more fervent, ideologically right-wing of faith” (p. 8) The Christian right in the United States affected new laws that shaped American foreign policy. Economic neoliberalism became prevalent in the United States during this time and meant that more people were responding to poverty,

inequality, and social injustices, which resulted in the expansion of faith-based organizations.

The decrease in the power of the state in society facilitated the growth of faith-based INGOs. In Sub-Saharan Africa, due to the significant role of faith-based organizations in society, “fifty percent of education and health services were provided by faith groups and FBOs at the beginning of the millennium” (Clark, 2006, p. 11). Whether or not these services were sustainable was not mentioned, however.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, there emerged the realization that decades of developmental aid often has very little impact and that dependency dangers exist, hence the saying “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” The dependency theory asserts that developing countries provided developed countries with natural resources and labor so that the developed countries can live comfortably, and the developed countries cause the dependence of the developing countries on them through foreign investment and other means. According to Kelleher & Klein (2011), “developing economies depend on the industrial world for markets, capital and capital goods, consumer goods, refined fuels, processed food, and just about everything else that characterizes a modern economy,” (98) therefore, using developed countries for only resources and cheap labor, without helping them gain skill, will only cause them to depend on developed countries for economic security.

After looking at the dependency theory, the principles of sustainability, self-sufficiency, and participation became important: citizens must have a stake in the outcomes of development in order for it to have long-lasting effects on communities. According to Dichter (1999), INGOs were seen as the “primary mechanism for harnessing social and human capital for social good” (p. 45). During this time, the roles of INGOs operated harmoniously with the government’s roles due to INGOs’ commitment, grassroots experience, organizational structure, and low cost.

However, INGOS had to decrease their direct involvement in humanitarian activities in developing countries abroad because of the rise of indigenous NGOs in those countries. The activities of the different organizations could have clashed and caused conflicts. Instead, they were encouraged to become involved with institutions in their respective countries of origin. Furthermore, the drive to operate efficiently often caused hard feelings within faith-based INGOS due to their relatively small size.

The 1996 Welfare Act and 2001 Faith-based and Community Initiatives Act banned discrimination against faith-based organizations by allotting them government contracts and money, which possibly made the boundary between church and state undefined (Clarke, 2006, p. 12). After the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War, there was a rise in identity politics, and people that initially supported socialism and communism now turned to faith-based work for equality. Identity politics also encouraged the acceptance of public religion, which helped faith-based activism to grow. Immigration has driven the growth of faith-based organizations that are not Christian, such as Hindu, Islamic, and Jewish organizations. These are alternatives to Christian NGOs and help non-Christians maintain their faiths.

Colonization, Liberalism, and Neoliberalism in Latin America

Three prominent historical movements in Latin America-colonization, liberalism, and neoliberalism-are important to note in this discussion of faith-based INGOS because each of these movements display the extent of the role of religion and of the state in Latin America. During colonization, Roman Catholicism held an extraordinary amount of power in the region and determined the structure of society. During the liberalization movement, anti-clericalism and secularization occurred, which decreased the power of the church and increased the role of the state in society. Liberalism marks the dawn of the welfare state, which lessened the need for aid

from INGOS. During the arrival of neoliberalism, the role of the state was minimized, which caused the cutting of welfare programs and increased the need for INGOS, both secular and faith-based. This section examines the effect of these three movements on the operations of faith-based INGOS in Latin America.

One of the ways in which the Spanish attempted to colonize Latin America and to “civilize” the native people there was to establish missions, giving Roman Catholicism a strong foothold in the region for centuries to come. The Spanish missionaries converted the indigenous to Catholicism with hopes that they would continue the process of proselytization, therefore spreading Christianity throughout the New World. The Spanish colonizers demonstrated ethnocentrism, which is “judging the customs of another culture according to the standards of your own” (Kelleher & Klein, 2011, p. 38). The ethnocentrism of the Spanish justified violence against the indigenous in the name of God.

Catholic European nations, especially Spain, wanted to spread Christianity mainly to strongly establish their own power. Missionaries were seen as means of imperialism, and together with the Spanish colonizers, they spread the Spanish language, culture, religion, political system, and economic system throughout the New World. Some of the aims of the Spanish were to make the indigenous more like Spanish citizens and to urbanize the New World. Trying to make the New World similar to Spain, the Spanish used religion as a strategy of conquest and eliminated all native cultures and practices. The Jesuits, a congregation of the Catholic church, came to Spanish America in the mid 1500s and looked to Thomas More’s book *Utopia* for inspiration. They were granted self-government from the king, and “saw themselves as fulfilling Thomas More’s prophesy, and to carry out this work they chose the impenetrable

jungles of the New World as their home and workshop” (Smith 2014). The Jesuits became a powerful group in Latin America during the colonial era.

Societies in Spanish America during colonization were structured around churches with special jurisdiction over the regions. The Catholic church affected society on both the structural level and the personal level. Permeating the economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of society, the Church was the dominant power in most regions of Latin America. In regard to the economic aspect, the Jesuits and other religious orders of the Catholic church were given large plots of land; therefore the majority of the land in Latin America was owned by the Catholic church. According to Smith (2014), “Jesuits used their wealth to direct and control seminaries and missions of great importance to the economic life of the colonies.” The Jesuits transported clergymen to South America to convert the indigenous on the Jesuits’ lands to Catholicism. To carry out their utopian experiment (proposed by Thomas More), the Jesuits created communal farms and kept converts separate from the indigenous nonbelievers so the converts would not be tempted to engage in “sinful” practices. Politically, the regions of Latin America were governed by religious bodies. Specifically, the Jesuit reductions were governed by elected representatives, and slave labor of the indigenous was utilized in these missions.

Socially, the Catholic church dominated society as well. When babies were born, Catholic priests had the duty of deciding their race, and records were kept based on baptism certificates, not on birth certificates. Therefore, all people of the New World were expected to adhere to the traditions of the Catholic church if they wished to be a part of society. Also, the Catholic church reinforced a rigid social structure, with landowners at the top and the indigenous at the very bottom. Since the Church owned most of the land, it held the most powerful position in society. The Catholic church profoundly affected the lives of the people there, including their

level of religiosity. Being a non-believer was unheard of; however some were more religious than others of course.

However, during the decolonization of Latin America and its fragmentation into republics, the structure of the region changed drastically. Liberalism became prominent on the international stage in the 18th century and in the mid 1820s, a liberal revolution swept Latin America due to many liberal leaders coming to power. These leaders took away many of the Church's rights and put services such as education and marriage under the secular power of the state. Ideas of liberalism became especially prominent in Latin America in the late 1800s, which entailed the secularization of the political system, the economy, the social set-up, and the overall structure of Latin America. Liberalism advocated for liberty and equality, and strongly opposed a state religion and an absolute monarchy. The welfare state was a reaction to liberalism and gave a human face to capitalism. Therefore, there was not a strong need for INGOs in Latin America during this time. Anti-clericalism in the region became more widespread because many believed that religious figures put a damper on social progress. Leaders of the decolonization movement gained inspiration from the American and French Revolutions, which denounced the power of the clergy, advocated for democracy, and encouraged nationalism.

With secularization, when babies were born, they were now registered with the state via birth certificates instead of baptism certificates issued by the Church. These decolonization and liberal movements in Latin America decreased the power of the Catholic church in the daily lives of the citizens and led to the widespread secularization of many of the Latin American nations.

It is theorized that secularization is a result of modernization and rationalization. Secularization and modernization go hand in hand, as technology encourages growth in institutions. According to Horton (2013), the secularization thesis is "as more societies

modernize, they become less religious.” In Latin America, modernization entails a transition from a traditional farming economy to an industrial, modern economy. Therefore, “modernization of society implies a greater dependency on rational thinking and technological creativity” (Verweij, 1997, p. 310). Modernity reduced the role of religion in the state, and instead of “religious love,” there evolved secularized forms of assistance such as education, health care, and welfare. There was a shift from oral traditions to writing, which made knowledge more widely available and reduced the importance of religious figures as the holders of true knowledge. This can be seen as differentiation, where aspects of society become more distinct from one another.

The pendulum of ideologies in Latin America swung from the domination of the Catholic church to liberalism, and then back to neoliberalism, which has become common in the past twenty five years. Neoliberalism supports private, free enterprise, where businesses compete with one another without government regulation or intervention. Whereas the spread of liberalism caused the growth of the welfare state, neoliberalism supports cutting state spending on social services, which means less welfare programs and the privatization of everything that was formerly state-owned. Therefore, developmental aid from INGOs became very valuable and the demand for INGOs increased. According to Martinez & Garcia (1996), “neoliberalism is destroying welfare programs; attacking the rights of labor (including all immigrant workers); and cutbacking social programs.” Therefore, neoliberalism gives the duty of the provision of social services back to the church because neoliberalism opposes the welfare state. Regarding the role of neoliberalism in the scope of faith-based INGOs, it creates a heightened need for these organizations in developing countries. Faith-based INGOs provide social services and assistance

that the government can not or will not provide, so the cutting of state assistance warrants a greater need for help provided by faith-based INGOS.

In the 1970s during the Ford Administration in the United States, the Catholics and evangelical Protestants collaborated, believing that they should act as common witnesses to the modern world and strive for spiritual ecumenism. This collaboration signaled the alliance of these two sects of Christianity, opening the arms of Catholic Latin America to evangelical Protestants that were increasingly entering the region, many via evangelical INGOS (Smith 2014). Religion often operates just like economic markets: when there is a wider consumer base and less state regulation of religion, there exists more religion in the society. More state regulation means less religious participation and reduces variety and initiative. Lately, there has been a transition from the type of churches people in Latin America attend. More are attending the Assemblies of God rather than the mainline churches, which reflects free enterprise and religious freedom. Religion has become more of a private practice rather than a public obligation. Religious freedom has caused these nations to become perfect hosts for faith-based INGOS who want to deliver aid because the people do not necessarily feel bound to a certain religion by the state and are consequently not opposed to accepting help from a non-Catholic INGO.

Case Study: Guatemala

In Guatemala, the evangelical Protestant movement in the country had quite a lot of success in the 1980s and early 1990s. Fundamentalist Christians evangelized during this time period in developing countries, seeing themselves as “soldiers in God’s army” (Rose & Brouwer, 1990, p. 43). Hoping to convert the “heathens” and to rid the world of communism, they increased the United States’ influence in Guatemala through evangelism. Today, non-

denominational Christians continue to evangelize in Guatemala, and this has affected the process of democratization that the country has been undergoing in recent years.

History of Roman Catholicism in Guatemala

The Roman Catholic church held most of the power in Guatemala until liberal leaders came to power in the 1870s. Guatemala today has no state religion, but its constitution acknowledges Roman Catholicism as a legitimate religion in the state. The spread of Protestantism in Guatemala has increased, caused by Protestant missionaries evangelizing in the latter half of the twentieth century. In 1871, Guatemala experienced a liberal revolution sparked by Granados and Barrios seizing power from the conservative Cerna (Smith 2014). This liberal rule sparked vast economic growth, social and political changes, higher economic inequality, and secularization of the state. When President Barrios challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic church in 1882, more Protestants arrived because he invited them to come. Barrios was Guatemala's first liberal dictator and he valued economic growth over political liberalism. To grow more coffee, he took land from the indigenous and used them for cheap labor (Smith 2014). The Guatemalan government then forced these rural dwellers to work on state projects. Protestantism in Latin America in the late 1800s meant free economic liberalism, democracy, science, and the promotion of free enterprise, all of which allowed Guatemala to obtain raw materials.

As well as welcoming Protestants into the country, Barrios reduced the authority of the Roman Catholic church, eliminated the tithe, took away property that the church owned and eliminated many clericals in the country. The public schools that Barrios built were for the interests of only the upper and middle classes, so illiteracy remained high in the rural areas, where priests had previously been the only source of education.

Protestantism in Guatemala

Today, out of all the nations in Latin America, Guatemala has the highest percentage of Protestants and most of them are conservative evangelicals. The ruling parties in Guatemala allowed this evangelism because it enabled them to keep a steady stream of power in the country and stressed individual, instead of collective, salvation under liberation theology. Nationally in Guatemala, indigenous churches and local leaders have been evangelizing for quite a while, though most of the evangelism in Guatemala has been coming from the United States via faith-based INGOS.

Of course, the ideologies of these evangelists favored capitalism and transnational business interests. Economic inequality and the scarcity of opportunity in Guatemala made it easy for the evangelicals to come in and convert as many people as they possibly can. Evangelicals tended to be opposed to any type of revolution and blamed poverty on laziness and sin, and in Guatemala “the lower- and working-class churches and schools focused on the need to resist the temptations of evil spirits more than on international and national politics. They also emphasized the need to work hard in order to become upwardly mobile.” (Rose & Brouwer, 1990, p. 43). Clearly, many of the evangelicals in Guatemala preached the prosperity gospel, which believes that financial well-being is decided by God for Christians and the more “Christian” you act, the wealthier you will be. Capitalists relied on evangelism because evangelism saw social issues as individual problems, and then solved these problems at the structural level. Therefore, evangelical Protestantism preserved values of capitalism and blamed poverty on sin and laziness.

Evangelism Today in Guatemala

The evangelism movement in Guatemala is still prominent today. Converted Guatemalans import and export their religion quickly and with ease as though they are capitalists, and this spreads Christianity to all social classes in the country. Evangelistic groups see critical thinking of the masses as a threat to their power and try to prevent it as much as possible. Therefore, in a way, fundamental Christianity encourages state repression and the consequent slowing of the process of democratization in Guatemala.

Impact of faith-based INGOS

Looking at the long-term effects of faith-based INGOS is crucial to fully understanding them; however, getting an accurate picture of their effects over an extended period of time is difficult, if not impossible. This section examines both sustainable and unsustainable practices of faith-based INGOS and looks at their impact on Guatemalan society within a cultural, social, and environmental framework.

The beneficial social effects of INGOS on communities is often limited due to problems of dependency, unsustainable practices, and cultural differences. Although INGOS strive for progress in the host countries, long-term change often seems difficult for them to attain. The sustainability of development depends on the following contributing factors: the ability of the people or of the communities to pay for the resources necessary to maintain the development, the amount of resources available in the host country, the receptiveness of the people to the development, and the receptiveness of the host government to the INGOS. With strategies that encourage participatory development, sustainable development is quite attainable. In essence, participatory development emphasizes quality of development rather than quantity, and does not necessarily prioritize economic growth. According to Kelleher & Klein (2011), “making growth the primary objective has often reduced the quality of life of the poor because scarce resources

are...invested in increasing the production of cash crops instead of food” (p. 103). Participatory government focuses more on the well-being of citizens rather than the well-being of the economy. The three main strategies of participatory development are to fulfill the basic needs of the people, to encourage the locals to make decisions and to administer the labor during development, and to use sustainable resources that do not damage the environment of the host community.

Much of the sustainable development done by INGOs involves agriculture; for example, many INGOs come up with policies on forestry for the communities and convey the importance of native crops to governments. These practices are sustainable because they encourage the communities to improve their living standards rather than simply providing them with resources that may be expensive to maintain long-term. By introducing forestry policies to the communities, INGOs are helping communities improve their trade economies and avoid problems associated with rapid deforestation. Though there is a slight chance that these policies may not be carried out, they are very likely to at least produce some positive change in the communities. Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of native crops in these communities helps them to preserve their native culture and gives their economies a boost by encouraging them to grow the crops that grow best on those lands. Doing this encourages the communities to grow their native crops and to derive the maximum benefits from them. As an example, INGOs encourage the communities of eastern Guatemala to grow bananas, pineapple, and cashews, because these crops grow best there and have the longest growing seasons.

A possibly unsustainable service provided by many INGOs is aiding in agrarian reform in Latin America and Southeast Asia by giving slums access to services such as electricity and water. Though the aid given by INGOs is greatly needed and often beneficial at the time it is

delivered, it is rarely sustainable because these communities do not have the money to maintain resources, especially technological and agricultural ones. INGOS are often allowed undisturbed passage into nations during times of internal unrest with intentions of providing emergency humanitarian aid; however, once they leave, their services go with them and the community is once again vulnerable to the lack of resources resulting from environmental or political disasters.

Political conflicts dampen the prospect of sustainable development occurring in the communities receiving aid. These conflicts lead to violence, which leads to destruction of territory and of the environment, wiping out years of development. To complicate matters further, political conflicts make it difficult for INGOS to determine who should receive aid and who should not because they do not want to favor one side over another. According to Anderson (1996), “circumstances of violent conflict add complexities to the operating environment of international NGOs that often distort the impact of their interventions” (p. 345). Infrastructure built by NGOs may be used for transportation of the military services, which heightens the likelihood that the infrastructure will be destroyed in a violent conflict because it was used for military transportation.

The cultural impact of INGOS, especially of Americanization, is profound, often resulting in the stifling of native cultures. In general, INGOS foster the concept of the “global citizen,” where it is implied that identity transcends national borders and is essentially monocultural. This supports the theory of Global Primacy, which sees “the globalization of the world, not only as the main trend of this time, but as the increasing reality of the future” (Kelleher & Klein, 2011, p. 49). Yes, this encourages unity and the idea that we are all equal in our global citizenship, but it also implies that native cultures are subordinated to a dominant culture and are eventually lost or minimized. Some cultures must be the leaders who set the standards in the global arena. In most

cases involving INGOs, the dominant culture is the American culture, and global Americanization occurs. When INGOs enter another country to provide aid and development, they often exterminate the native culture there (either intentionally or unintentionally) by enacting social change that reflects their own culture. Various aspects of ethnocentrism can play a role in this, because the aid deliverers naturally judge the practices of another culture in relation to their own culture. These changes, such as ones involving education, infrastructure, politics, and other structural aspects of a country, may be beneficial for the country's development but can destroy its culture and integrity.

If the aid deliverers are paternalistic, which means they believe themselves to be superior to the host culture, they are usually not welcomed by the host culture. Global Primacy adherents tend to have a paternalistic nature whereas Cultural Primacy adherents see individual cultures as having their own autonomous rights, and they are particularly interested in nations, cultures, ethnic groups, and the indigenous. Above all, followers of Cultural Primacy value the equality of all people and “prioritize the autonomous rights of individual cultures, regardless of their power” (Kelleher & Klein, 2011, p. 53). They believe that one culture should not have more autonomy than any others.

I will now compare the cultural impact of two INGOs operating in Guatemala: Mission Guatemala, which is faith-based, and IFRE, which is secular. Mission Guatemala is a United Methodist organization that runs a health clinic and preschool feeding program in San Andrés Semetebaj, Guatemala, and is always looking for new endeavors, especially ones of health, education, and nutrition, that will serve the impoverished indigenous, which is the group in Guatemala most affected by poverty (Mission Guatemala Inc. 2013). Mission Guatemala's Medical Clinic targets the indigenous, and if it were not for this clinic, many of them would not

receive any medical treatment because they cannot afford the treatments in the public clinics. The public clinics in Guatemala often discriminate against these people and tend to be understaffed and careless.

Mission Guatemala's health clinic sounds like a perfect solution to the problem of the indigenous in Guatemala having limited access to healthcare; however, there are some cultural contradictions associated with this system. Traditional Mayan beliefs relate medicine with religion, and assign shamans, or medicine men, the task of practicing medicine and delivering treatments. Shamans are attuned to the spiritual and medical needs of the people they serve and are well-educated in many procedures performed by modern doctors in First World countries today. Mayans see illness as a result of misbehavior, which causes transcendent beings to capture the soul and cause sickness. Aspects of ritual, cleansing, and herbal remedy are very important in Mayan medicine. First, the ill person tells the shaman about his or her past, physical attributes, and current physical symptoms, and the shaman then determines the cause of the illness and the most effective type of treatment for it, which may involve a plant treatment or some type of simple surgical procedure.

Many of the Mayans today in Guatemala forgo medical treatment because it is expensive or inaccessible, which contributes to increased illness and mortality. However, Mission Guatemala providing them with modern, American medical treatment can greatly compromise their religious values and beliefs. In the health clinic, the specialists are not spiritual figures familiar with the Mayan world of sorcery and herbal remedies, and the commercially produced medicines were never previously used by the Mayans. This represents a great loss in the Mayan culture because modern health clinics do not incorporate Mayan healing elements of herbs, therapy, and ritual. Therefore, there is a slight risk of ethnocide, "the destruction of a culture"

(Kelleher & Klein, 2011, p. 50), in this situation because the Mayan cultural beliefs regarding healing can be compromised. There is also a possibility that Mission Guatemala is acting paternalistically if it behaves as if the Mayans are children that do not know how to take care of themselves. Just because their cultural practices do not involve modern medicine does not mean they are primitive and inferior.

To prepare preschool-age children for school, Mission Guatemala gives them Spanish lessons. Many of these children grew up in indigenous villages and speak only indigenous languages, so these Spanish lessons help them master Guatemala's official language and hopefully benefit them in school and in the workforce. This is a positive cultural impact as long as the children continue to use their indigenous languages at home. That way, they are maintaining their Mayan culture but also integrating themselves into the Spanish-speaking society, where the economy is more developed and they can find better jobs.

Mission Guatemala also teaches these same children basic hygiene. The effects of this can be both positive and negative. From a medical standpoint, these hygiene lessons are essential in stopping the spread of germs and disease. Mission Guatemala is possibly preserving the health of the indigenous by giving their children life skills that are not widely learned or practiced in the indigenous villages. However, in a cultural context, personal hygiene is not a significant priority for the Mayans because in their ancient religion, they believe that misbehavior causes the capture of the soul by supernatural beings, causing sickness. From their cultural viewpoint, illness is not caused by germs and poor hygiene. Therefore, these hygiene lessons may be preventing disease, but they are infringing on the Mayan culture and going against their ancient beliefs. For this reason, these practices ultimately will not be sustainable.

To combat the respiratory problems incurred by cooking over wood fires with no ventilation, Mission Guatemala has established a stove project to build wood-burning stoves that operate efficiently by using less wood. Not only does this decrease deforestation in Guatemala, but it also saves the families money and allows smoke to be directed away from the house through vents. Another fantastic aspect of these stoves is they provide environmental benefits without having a significant cultural impact. They can still cook the same exact foods as before and use less wood doing it. Their diets and eating times can remain exactly as they were before the efficient stoves. However, if one day the land around the families becomes completely deforested or if the families are not able to afford wood anymore to power the stoves, these stoves will be obsolete for them and will simply take up valuable space in their already tiny huts.

Mission Guatemala has other programs that are extremely beneficial in the short-run, but most likely are not sustainable in the long run. To combat Guatemala's high malnutrition rate, Mission Guatemala has established Feeding Centers that provide a wholesome lunch to one hundred children five days a week. Bought by donations and cooked by mothers in the village, these meals give the children most of their daily calories, which is necessary since this is the only meal many of them receive in a day. Mission Guatemala's focus is to feed five hundred children seven days a week in the near future as the feeding program expands. This organization has also collaborated with a local group named Mayan Families to establish a Preschool/Nutrition Center that gives preschool children a meal, snack, and vitamin supplements to combat malnutrition in young children.

Although Mission Guatemala's feeding programs provide food only for children, it is important that these children receive meals during this stage of their life because this is the time that their brains are developing. Without adequate brain development, these children will

struggle in school and may even drop out, repeating the cycle of poverty. These programs set impoverished children up for success by nourishing them and helping them to reach an adequate state of health. However, as beneficial as this may be at this point in time, it is very unlikely that Mission Guatemala will be able to continue doing this forever. Most of Mission Guatemala's care costs are covered by private donations, and there is no guarantee that there will be a constant flow of donations. One day, funds may dry up, signaling the end of Mission Guatemala's feeding programs. The Guatemalan communities currently being served will undoubtedly be unable to afford to provide the amount of food that Mission Guatemala is currently providing to the children.

IFRE Volunteers, or the Institute of Field Research Expeditions, is a non-profit secular volunteer group that emphasizes traveling for the purpose of charity work. IFRE's targeted regions are typically Central and South America, Asia, and Africa. This organization focuses on improving education, healthcare, environmental conservation, and development abroad, hoping to make the world overall a better place (IFRE Volunteers 2013). The aims of this organization must be culturally contextualized. Is IFRE attempting to make the world a better place from the viewpoint of the American culture, or from the culture of the native people? How is "better" determined? Could some of the changes that are seen as "good" from the American viewpoint be devastating to the native cultures?

IFRE has various programs in different countries, but we are going to center in on IFRE's effects on orphanages, rural schools, and other projects in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. In orphanages and in rural schools, volunteers teach English based on pre-established English curriculums and help develop conversational and grammatical English skills. IFRE claims that fluency in both Spanish and English makes these students competitive in the local and global job

markets, and that teaching the children English at a young age increases the possibility of complete fluency by adulthood. But some questions that surface are: Why do these Guatemalan children need to learn English if they are already fluent in Spanish? This organization seems to be implying that these children need to abandon Guatemala, and their cultural practices, to find work in an English-speaking country after they are educated.

IFRE teaching English to these children in orphanages and in rural schools is an example of Americanization. The implications are that English is the superior language and should be learned by all who want to have a decent job and be successful in the future. IFRE is using American curriculums to educate Guatemalan children who already have their own customs, traditions, and language. These curriculums, based on American culture, have a cultural impact on the Guatemalan students because IFRE is conveying to them that American customs, such as the manner of teaching and the language, are superior to Guatemalan customs. English is not the only language that leads to economic success, and English-speaking countries are not the only countries that have adequate employment. IFRE's presence in orphanages and in rural schools in Guatemala, though it may lead to a "higher-quality" education, represents a destruction of Guatemalan culture via the enforcement of American ideas and cultural practices.

IFRE promotes more sustainable development than Mission Guatemala in the communities it serves because it uses a grassroots approach of supporting communities in solving their own problems. Using this approach means that the community governs itself rather than a central power asserting control over it, and this is promoting participatory development. IFRE volunteers assist in helping the community execute the plan it has made to combat its problems. It is beneficial for the communities to come up with their own solutions to their issues because this leads to longer-lasting effects. As the theory of participatory development asserts, if

the people themselves have a substantial role in their own development and conflict resolution, they are more likely to be able to adequately solve future issues that arise because they have had previous experience in this area.

IFRE conducts a Women's Project, through which it educates women, helps the staff of the local government to run the program, does Spanish-English translations, escorts women to court trials, and assists in educational workshops. It is highly significant that IFRE works with the government who runs the program for women because partnerships between INGOs and the local governments improve the likelihood that there will be sustainable change in the communities. The government is at the heart of the community, and its policies often determine the community's livelihood. If the government's policies benefit the community, the community will thrive, but if the policies impair it, the community suffers. Since IFRE is working with the government to enact positive change, especially concerning women's rights, these changes are likely to survive and prosper. However, if the host government and the INGO do not form friendly relations, it is unlikely that women will receive education or rights, and the development will be unsustainable.

Potentially unsustainable development is done by two non-denominational evangelical Christian INGOs: World Vision and Samaritan's Purse. World Vision claims to help developing countries improve their education and health care, grow food, create jobs, and provide for their children. This development may not be sustainable, however, if the area does not have the financial resources to provide education and health care for its inhabitants for longer than a few years. It is possible that the systems World Vision sets up decay after a while due to the higher precedence of other necessities that demand immediate attention, such as food, water, and living expenses.

World Vision advocates for public participation and government policies that will decrease poverty. Although World Vision is advocating for these things, there is no guarantee that they will happen. Public participation can easily be stifled by governments that strive for absolute power, and the citizens of many developing countries have little participation in government. It is unlikely that an organization such as World Vision can change this. Furthermore, World Vision's evangelical nature might rub the host governments the wrong way, especially if they are hostile to World Vision's efforts to Christianize the population. They are likely to completely ignore World Vision's advocacy of policies aiming to alleviate poverty, and sustainable development will therefore not be obtained.

Samaritan's Purse faces a predicament similar to World Vision's. It's explicit goals are to share God's love through the actions of Jesus Christ and to fulfill the spiritual and physical needs of people suffering from war, poverty, disaster, and disease. Spreading the message of Jesus Christ can spell trouble for Samaritan's Purse and Christians in general if they are operating in a country that opposes Christianity or if aid recipients feel their own religion is threatened or minimized in any way.

Concluding Thoughts

Throughout the course of researching for this paper, I have discovered both the positive impacts and the detrimental effects of faith-based INGOS on the communities they serve. Before writing this paper, I was intent on working for a faith-based INGO after graduation from college, and this has not changed. However, my eyes have been opened more to the true nature of these organizations and the possible cultural destruction they are capable of causing.

During the progression of my research of faith-based INGOS and of the writing of this paper, I have compiled numerous findings that intrigue me. I have discovered that the principal

international roles of faith-based INGOs are human rights advocacy, humanitarian work, protection for people, and public education and that the degree of religiosity of these groups determines the type of work they do, their donor bases, and the countries in which they serve. Furthermore, faith-based INGOs have existed since World War II but became especially prominent in the United States during the Christian right movement in politics during Reagan's presidency. I also discovered during this discourse that the movements of colonization, liberalism, and neoliberalism in Latin America determined the roles of the state and religion, with the pendulum of power swinging back and forth. I then looked at the role of Roman Catholicism in Guatemala and how evangelical Protestantism has decreased its role over the years. Finally, I studied the impact of faith-based INGOs on the communities they serve and which of their practices are actually sustainable. Looking at the impact of a few INGOs on Guatemala, I realized that although it is difficult to see many positive effects of INGOs, many of these organizations have had significant impacts on the country.

I have taken a great interest in faith-based INGOs because I hope to work for one of these groups in Latin America when I graduate from college. This summer, I will be volunteering with a secular INGO in an orphanage in Guatemala for five weeks. Guatemala is a country very close to my heart because my baby brother was adopted from there nine years ago at the tender age of eight months. Before my family brought him back to the United States, he was cared for in an excellent children's home in Guatemala City that was run by an American woman.

From networking with various people that run faith-based INGOs in Guatemala, I have realized that I want to dedicate my life to working for these types of organizations. I want to wake up every day knowing that I will make a difference in the lives of people that need care the most, and I want to go to sleep every night knowing that not only did I do things throughout the

day for the benefit of someone else, but I benefitted from my work as much as the recipients did. This paper has inspired within me an initiative to reach out to the impoverished internationally and to find true purpose in my life by doing so. I hope to promote a positive image of the United States in Latin America and to convey the importance of humanitarian work, because what is the point of living “comfortably” unless it is shared with others?

During the course of my research, I stumbled upon some limitations. I was unable to trace the numerical growth of faith-based INGOS since their rise in popularity after World War II, and I also could not find information about the direct impact of faith-based INGOS on Guatemala. I also did not consult with the beneficiaries of the services of faith-based INGOS to gain their outlook on them. However, the research I found regarding faith-based INGOS was very beneficial for my project and insightful.

That being said, I hope this paper armed others that may not have previously known about faith-based INGOS with information and possibly inspired them to get involved with one some day. If not, at least the eyes of the readers of this paper are now opened to the plight of poverty around the world and ways that the wealthier nations are trying to enact change. After all, “I have one life and one chance to make it count for something...My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference”-Jimmy Carter.